

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 OMB-01 CU-02 IO-10 CIAE-00 PM-03

H-01 INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /071 W

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R 111103Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9023

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

CINCPAC HONOLULU

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 19348

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJECT: CAMPAIGN '75 -- I

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: BANGKOK 18802

INTRODUCTION: THE THAI NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS ARE
SCHEDULED FOR 26 JANUARY 1975. THIS IS THE FIRST OF
SEVEN WEEKLY ELECTION CAMPAIGN SITUATION REPORTS.

SUMMARY: THE PARLIAMENTARY CAMPAIGNS IN THAILAND HAVE
GOTTEN OFF TO A SLOW START, ALTHOUGH CANDIDATE INTEREST
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IS HIGH WITH OVER 2000 PEOPLE RUNING FOR 269 POSITIONS.

PERSONALITIES RATHER THAN PARTIES WILL BE THE PRINCIPAL FACTOR IN ELECTORAL SUCCESS AND MANY OF THE CAMPAIGN POSTERS EVIDENT AROUND THE COUNTRY DO NOT CARRY THE CANDIDATES' PARTY AFFILIATION. SOME POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE TESTING THE POLITICAL WATERS THROUGH THEIR SUPPORT OF CANDIDATE SLATES IN THE DECEMBER 14 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. THE PARTIES ARE ALSO PROPOUNDING VARIOUS ISSUES, INCLUDING THE AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE. ESTIMATES FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY CONTINUE TO PREDICT SIGNIFICANT SUCCESS FOR THE CONSERVATIVE ESTABLISHMENT PARTIES.

END SUMMARY.

1. APPROXIMATELY 2190 PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, ACCORDING TO RECENT NEWSPAPER REPORTS, HAVE PAID THE 4000 BAHT (U.S. \$200) CANDIDATE REGISTRATION FEE. THESE CANDIDATES ARE RUNNING IN 124 ELECTORAL DISTRICTS FOR THE 269 SEAT PARLIAMENT. THE NATION ANNOUNCED ON DECEMBER 10 THAT THE HIGHEST REGISTRATION WAS IN ELECTORAL DISTRICT NUMBER 2 OF SISAKET PROVINCE WITH 39 CANDIDATES VYING FOR THREE PARLIAMENTARY SEATS.

2. PERSONALITIES REMAIN THE PRIMARY FACTOR IN THE CAMPAIGNS. THE SONGKHLA CONSUL UNDERLINED THIS POINT BY COMMENTING THAT RARELY DOES A POSTER OUTSIDE OF A SOUTHERN PROVINCIAL CAPITAL ANNOUNCE THE CANDIDATE'S PARTY. THAI POLITICIANS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE COMMENTED FOR SOME TIME THAT THE STRESS ON PERSONALITIES AND THE ADOPTION OF ELECTORAL DISTRICTS WILL INCREASE CAMPAIGN RIVALRIES AND LEAD TO VIOLENCE. SOMEONE MURDERED A NEW FORCE PARTY PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATE FROM LOPBURI DECEMBER 5, AND THE NEWSPAPERS ORIGINALLY PLAYED THE INCIDENT AS THE BEGINNING OF CAMPAIGN VIOLENCE. WHILE THERE HAVE ALREADY BEEN REPORTS OF CAMPAIGN MANAGERS OR WARDSMEN MEETING AN UNTIMELY DEATH, THE LOPBURI INCIDENT APPEARS TO BE THE RESULT OF PAROCHIAL BUSINESS RIVALRIES.

3. THE CAMPAIGN SO FAR HAS GOTTEN OFF TO A SLOW START, WITH LITTLE EVIDENCE IN THE PRESS OF POLITICAL CHARGE AND COUNTERCHARGE. CHULALONGKON UNIVERSITY SPONSORED PUBLIC MEETINGS WHICH INTRODUCED PARTY LEADERS AND THEIR PLATFORMS.

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FORMS NOVEMBER 15 AND 22. THE DISCUSSIONS WERE DRY AND THE AUDIENCE FOUND M.R. KHUKRIT PRAMOT, LEADER OF THE SOCIAL ACTION PARTY, M.R. SENI PRAMOT, LEADER OF THE DEMOCRAT PARTY, AND PARAMAN ADIREKSAN, LEADER OF THE THAI NATION PARTY, THE MORE INTERESTING SPEAKERS. KHUKRIT GAVE A JOCUAR ADDRESS THAT DREW LAUGHS FROM THE PRIMARILY STUDENT AUDIENCE. PRAMAN WAS MORE SERIOUS AND DID NOT HANDLE QUESTIONS DEFTELY. THE AUDIENCE WARMLY RECEIVED SENI.

AFTER SENI SPOKE MOST OF THE AUDIENCE LEFT THE AUDITORIUM. SOCIAL JUSTICE LEADER THAWIT KLINPRATHUM ALSO SPOKE AT ONE OF THE SHULALONGKON SEMINARS BUT MADE SUCH A POOR PRESENTATION THAT DR. NIPHON SASITHON, PARTY ADVISOR, HAD TO RESCUE HIM.

4. THE SOCIAL ACTION PARTY AND THE THAI NATION PARTY HAVE POSTERED BANGKOK FOR ALMOST TWO WEEKS. OTHER PARTIES ARE STARTING TO MAKE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CITY'S BEAUTIFICATION. THE DEMOCRATS HELD THEIR FIRST RALLY AT SANAM LUANG DECEMBER 4, AND HAVE ANNOUNCED PLANS FOR VARIOUS FUND RAISING EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE CAMPAIGN.

5. THE MOST MONEYED PARTIES ARE PROBABLY THE FOUR PRINCIPAL ESTABLISHMENT PARTIES (REFTEL) AND THE SOCIAL ACTION PARTY. THE DEMOCRATS, NEW FORCE, AND SOCIALISTS ARE AT THE POLITICAL POVERTY LEVEL. PRAMAN ADIREKSAN, LEADER OF THE THAI NATION PARTY, HAS MADE NO BONES ABOUT PARTY FINANCING AND PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED THAT EACH OF THE PARTY'S CANDIDATES WILL RECEIVE 50,000 BAHT (U.S. \$2500) IN CAMPAIGN EXPENSES.

6. THE CONSULATES IN UDORN AND CHIANG MAI REPORT THAT THE NATIONAL PARTIES HAVE TAKEN AN INTEREST IN CANDIDATE SLATES FOR THE DECEMBER 14 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. CHIANG MAI IDENTIFIES PRASIT KANCHANAWAT'S SOCIAL NATIONALIST PARTY AS INVOLVED IN THE CHIANG MAI AND LAMPHUN CONTESTS. SOCIAL JUSTICE, DEMOCRAT, AND SOCIAL ACTION PARTY PERSONALITIES OR MONEY ARE ALSO INVOLVED IN OTHER MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. THESE ASSOCIATIONS MAY BE AN ATTEMPT TO TEST THE POLITICAL WATERS, AND STRENGTHEN A PARTY'S HOLD ON URBAN VOTERS.

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7. UDORN HAS REPORTED TWO INCIDENTS IN WHICH COMMUNIST PARTY OF THAILAND JUNGLE UNITS HAVE TOLD VILLAGERS TO VOTE FOR A SPECIFIC CANDIDATE OR THREATENED THE SAFETY OF RIVAL CANDIDATES WHO ENTER CPT INFLUENCED AREAS. UDORN REPORTED THAT A CPT UNIT IN ELECTORAL DISTRICT TWO OF SAKHON NAKHON TOLD VILLAGERS TO VOTE FOR THE CANDIDATE WITH THE LAST NAME OF "SIRIKHAN". PRATHIP SIRIKAN IS THE SOCIALIST PARTY CANDIDATE IN THAT DISTRICT, BUT HIS CHANCES OF ELECTORAL SUCCESS ARE POOR. OFFICIALS IN SAKHON NAKHOM DELIBERATELY DIVIDED THE PROVINCE INTO TWO ELECTORAL DISTRICTS ALONG A NORTH-SOUTH AXIS TO DILUTE CPT INFLUENCE IN THE MOUNTAINS ALONG THE PROVINCE'S NORTHERN BORDER, EVEN THOUGH THIS SPLIT COMPLICATES ELECTIONEERING BECAUSE THE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK IS ORIENTED EAST-WEST. THE OTHER INCIDENT OCCURRED IN CONFIDENTIAL

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NONG KHAI WHERE INSURGENTS SUPPORTED THE CHIEF OF A VILLAGE THAT GOVERNMENT FORCES BURNED DOWN IN JANUARY 1974. WHETHER THESE TWO INCIDENTS ARE COORDINATED OR ISOLATED LOCAL INITIATIVES, THREATS AND GUNS WILL PROBABLY BE INEFFECTIVE ONCE THE OTHER CANDIDATES START FLOODING THE PROVINCE WITH MONEY.

8. PRAMAN OF THE THAI NATION PARTY THRILLED MOST DIPLOMATIC OBSERVERS RECENTLY WITH THE STATEMENT THAT HE WOULD MOVE THE CAPITAL AWAY FROM BANGKOK, WHICH HE WOULD THEN TURN INTO A RIVER PORT. OTHER ISSUES WHICH PARTY LEADERS HAVE RAISED GENERALLY DEAL WITH THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY, AND THE NEED FOR LAND REFORM. THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE DIRECT CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE. ON THE FOREIGN POLICY SCENE, A NUMBER OF SPOKESMEN HAVE MENTIONED CONTINUING THE RAPPROCHEMENT WITH PEKING. PARTY LEADERS HAVE ALSO RAISED THE ISSUE OF THE AMERICAN MILITARY

PRESENCE (BANGKOK 19145).

9. POLITICAL ESTIMATES FROM UDORN AND CHIANG MAI
CONTINUE TO SUGGEST THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT PARTIES WILL
CONSTITUTE CLOSE TO ONE HALF OF THE PARLIAMENT (UDORN A-9).
CONSUL SONGKHLA SUGGESTS THAT IN THE SOUTH THE DEMOCRATS
ARE THE LEADING CANDIDATES IN 12 TO 14 CONTESTS, SOCIAL
JUSTICE IN 8 OR 9, SOCIAL AGRARIAN IN 3 OR 4, SOCIAL
ACTION AND SOCIALIST CANDIDATES IN TWO TO THREE RACES APIECE.
SONGKHLA ALSO REPORTS THAT INCREASED SINO-THAI PARTICIPATION
IN THE ELECTIONS MAY STEM MORE FROM CAMPAIGN STRATEGY THAN THE
LIBERALIZED NATIONALITY LAW. IN THE SOUTH, SINO-THAI ARE RUNNING
IN ANUMBER OF URBAN AREAS AS TICKET-SPLITTERS, HELPING
TO DIVIDE THE URBAN VOTE SO THAT THE RURAL BASED CANDIDATE
CAN WIN THE DAY. REPORTEDLY THESE SINO-THAI RECEIVE A
HANDSOME FEE FROM THEIR STABLEMATES IN THE RACE THEY DO
NOT EXPECT TO WIN.
MASTERS

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